

ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

# ALL SAINTS' E-LETTER

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 7

JULY 2018

## A LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

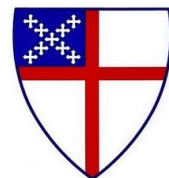
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

On Tuesday, July 3rd, Cynthia and I make our way to the General Convention and, for eleven days, from early in the morning until late in the evening, we both will be hip-deep in the creation and amending of policies, procedures, and liturgy of the church. And for some, the idea of a week and a half of meetings would strike them not unlike being trapped in the third circle of Dante's *Inferno*. But both of us enjoy it, primarily because we find in the thousands who come to this, a sense of comradery, spirituality, and the presence of Christ in the sometimes boisterous deliberations. In short, it is nothing other than holy work.

Everything that happens in this church that is official in nature, such as revisions of the Prayer Book and Hymnal; the means by which we engage in the world through social ministry on behalf of the church; the building and rebuilding of our canon law, which regulates the way we function as an organization; to how we discipline clergy, has to go through the convention as legislation. And that legislation, anywhere from 300 - 600 resolutions, has to pass two houses in an identical form. There is the House of Deputies, to which Cynthia and I belong, and there is the House of Bishops, to which Frank and Carol belong. And here is the fun part of the whole thing: We have to agree exactly in order for something to happen, or be changed, or be formulated in the first place. Now, before you begin to doze off thinking any further description of this process would be adequate anesthesia for a root canal or elective knee replacement, just let me highlight something that is really profound.

In this church authority to make decisions doesn't come through one's being, as some would see it, elevated or separated out. It does not come because a person dresses differently with a clerical collar or always walks in at the end of the procession, sometimes carrying a shepherd's crook. This church does not hand over its deliberations to a particular set of folks because they are proclaimed something other than the rest of us. No, the only *common* authority enabling us to make decisions within the Episcopal Church, shared by priests, deacons, laity and bishops, comes from baptism. The spiritual gifts that have been given you and me, or at least awakened in us, in my case on August 21st, 1955, are the juice that makes the difference in enabling us to reach conclusions.

There are around 880 folks in the House of Deputies. Now, just imagine the superfluity of the gifts of leadership, exhortation, administration, showing mercy, education, interpretation and the like that are found within. And the same takes place over at the House of Bishops with their some 200 in attendance. Gathered in, quite simply, a remarkable share of the Body of Christ to which every one of us are members. And when we make decisions or adopt a position on something, we are not acting as those we've separated out as worthy to guide us but rather we've said it's given to those we've elected, from ourselves, to serve in



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**LETTER FROM THE RECTOR (CONT'D)**

that capacity as members of the General Convention, including the bishops who are, in fact elected to be bishops, this body is functioning as a representation of Jesus in the world today.

The same thing applies here. When we meet as an annual meeting, as we just did when we resumed talking about building plans, or meet as a vestry, the totality of the power behind who we are, comes not from social status or birth right. Instead it comes from our sharing a radical sense of equality derived from baptism. In that sacrament we gain membership to the community of champions of the Gospel who find themselves coming here, Sunday after Sunday after Sunday. How sad if we were to abdicate that authority, or not claim it, thinking we just don't have standing like, say, the Presiding Bishop, who really is a very remarkable man, and who would say the very same thing about our common authority rising out of the waters in the font.

So having gone to these tri-ennial conventions, with a few exceptions, since 1985, it will be good to see old friends, become engaged in the business of the church (remember St. Paul identified "administration" as a spiritual endeavor), and come back exhausted from the relentless schedule. It is really a privilege, for since the dawn of the church, people have done just this, gathering together in the name of Christ, to not just keep the ball rolling but to help keep the Body alive and vibrant.

Faithfully yours,

Bradley

**ANNUAL MEETING CONTINUES**

I want to thank all who attended the meeting on June 10th, or watched it on FaceBook Live, or viewed it on YouTube. (Isn't it remarkable that two out of the three clauses in that sentence were totally unthinkable fifteen years ago in the case of YouTube and but a couple for Face Book Live?) And thanks, in particular, to Shawn who made the electronics of it all available to us. She has a remarkable ministry among us.

We have been collecting your responses and will act on them at the Vestry Meeting on June 24th. As soon as the Vestry confirms the general sense of the congregation responding, we will immediately let you know where we sense God is leading us in this opportunity. As you may or may not know, our Editor, Jan Rayford, has been called for possible Federal Court Jury Duty in Missoula, and so articles, such as this one, are being written earlier than usual and thus prior to the Vestry Meeting. **Thank you, Jan, for your willingness to serve on a jury. Your response to the 6th Amendment of the Bill of Rights is deeply appreciated by all.**

**THE CAMPERS ARE COMING! THE CAMPERS ARE COMING! (a preview)**

Around 7:15 am, the Camp Marshall staff arrives. They make coffee, and some of them might eat a quick bowl of cereal while they prepare for the arrival of the first campers.

At 7:30 am two moms show up with their combined four kids. They are carpooling to work in Kalispell, and dropping their kids off at day camp first. They are greeted, and the list is checked to make sure that all of their medical information is current. They have a couple of questions, but they were here last year and the year before, so they leave for work with confidence their children will be safe and having fun while they are at work.

The counselors engage the kids in board games while they wait for the rest of the kids to arrive. About

**THE CAMPERS ARE COMING! THE CAMPERS ARE COMING! (CONT'D)**

thirty kids will come in with their parents or guardians over the next hour and a half, and parents will have their questions addressed, missing forms will be filled out, and the kids will be assimilated into what will be their morning routine for the next week.

On the first day at camp at about 9:00 am, the camp director goes over the “camp rules”, and then begins “name games”. These are a series of fun and active games held on the front lawn outside the church, which somehow result in thirty or more young people knowing the names of everyone else at the end. It seems like magic that memorizing names has never been so easy and fun. But, camp counselors have a lot of “magic” up their sleeves!

Throughout the week the rest of the days will be filled with various activities. Challenge courses to help kids learn how to solve problems as a team, a food drive each week, swimming at the beach on two of the afternoons, and many games that are simply played for the fun of it. If it’s really hot, water is usually incorporated into outside games in some way.

Each day the campers gather mid-morning for “Godly Play,” and participate in a unique way of Christian Education, by studying stories from the Bible. The first session is old hat for the campers who have been here for more than one summer, and a bit mystifying for those who are new to this program. By the end of the week all of the campers will be familiar with the routine of story, questions and discussion, and responses with art, group work, or simply retelling stories to each other using the Godly Play materials.

Music is generally held at the end of the day, after the kids clean up. First, counselors parcel out the most coveted cleaning tasks to the most helpful campers of the day (vacuuming is considered a choice job). Anyone lucky enough to observe so many kids enthusiastically cleaning the parish hall from top to bottom will resolve to insist they get access to whatever magic formula created this.

During the singing time, held in the church, more “magic” ensues. The camp music director plays the guitar and leads the campers, and any adults present, in about 45 minutes of singing; from raucous, fun, “camp” songs with hand motions and sometimes dancing and jumping, to songs from the hymnal or contemporary Christian music. Parents start to show up to pick up the kids, and often wander in the church and sit in the back to just enjoy the sights and sounds.

After the kids leave, the four counselors are hosted by a parish member or family for dinner. They delight in what is always delicious food, and particularly relish conversing with some of the adults from All Saints' after a day of wearing their “Counselor Hats”. At least once each summer they return to the church after dark to knock down and dispose of any wasp nests that are in the vicinity, after it is cool and the inhabitants of the nests are (they hope) sleeping. Their impeccable training and their value for the safety of all of the kids does not end when the camp day is over.

It seems impossible to portray how truly “magical” these day camps are. One thing I know for sure, though, is that our prayers, and our determination to fulfill our baptismal promises by providing these day camps, are part of what makes what seems like magic for these two weeks.

Being in community with children from our surrounding area, playing and praying with them, discussing some of the really important things which are not temporal but eternal, and showing them the love of Jesus the best that we can, however imperfectly, is what this time is about. Those are the basics of the “magic” of day camp. In addition, the Camp Marshall staff who are spending their weeks in this amazing ministry are truly the hands and feet of Jesus to these children. The blessings which we all experience last much longer than just those two weeks.



**THE CAMPERS ARE COMING! THE CAMPERS ARE COMING! (CONT'D)**

All Saints' Day Camp is a free day camp hosted at All Saints' Episcopal Church, run by staff from Camp Marshall, and open to children from our communities who are going into grades 1-6. For more information, go online to <https://diomontana.com/camp-marshall/all-saints-cf-day-camp/> or call Cynthia Benkelman, All Saints' Christian Formation Minister, 406-261-9636.





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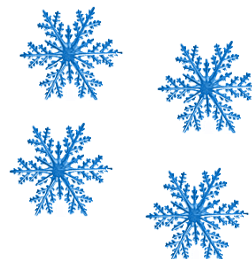
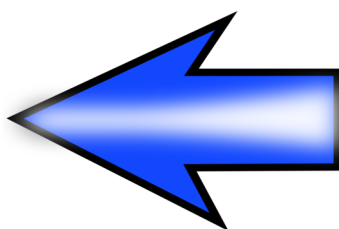
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 	5	6	7
8 Services at 9 and 11 am	9	10	11 Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	12 Noon service at AS	13	14
15 Services at 9 and 11 am  <b>Vestry 12:15</b>	16	17	18 Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	19 Noon service at AS	20	21
22 Services at 9 and 11 am	23	24	25 Bible Study 9:15 am at The Springs 10 am service at The Springs	26 Noon service at AS	27	28
29 Services at 9 and 11 am	30	31			29	30



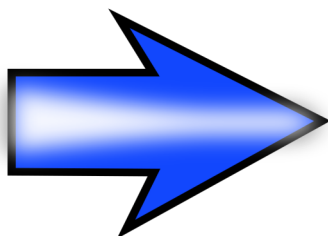
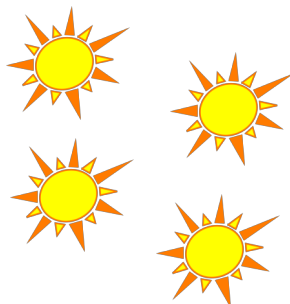
## REMEMBER WHEN.....?



Remember when we never thought this



would ever look like this again?



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*Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the church, and in Christ Jesus forever.*

**Find us here:**  
**Just click on the link!**

**Facebook link:** <https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsmt>

**YouTube link:** [http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPZ\\_oAI6n1GwSPS5dIAkzdA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPZ_oAI6n1GwSPS5dIAkzdA)

**Webpage link:** <http://www.allsaintsmt.org>

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